

(Gabb.)

520

[Aug. 30,

622

301

[727]

[422]

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622

[532]

to the reigning chief. The others were formerly also property of the chiefs, but are said to have been given as rewards of merit to the most successful leaders in the Tiribi war. The two belonging to the chief, as well as one belonging to the descendants of one of those warriors, all represent birds. The people call them eagles. The largest is between three and four inches across; the smaller of the chief's two, is double-headed. In connection with these "eagles" another royal emblem might be mentioned. It is a staff of hard black palm wood, over four feet long. The top is carved in the shape of an animal, not unlike a bear sitting on his haunches. But there are no bears in this country, and it must have been intended for some other animal. Below this figure, the stick is square, and is carved out into four pillars several inches long, with spaces between them. In the interior, between them, is a cavity in which a loose piece of the same wood can be shaken about. It was evidently left there in the carving, after the fashion of the Chinese. Below this, the stick is plain. I tried every means in my power to obtain this, but could not buy it.

525

Games of chance or of skill are equally unknown, and even when brought into contact with civilization, they do not seem to take kindly to gambling. In fact, they have so little to win or lose, and that little is so easily obtained, that the inducement does not exist.

262

[251]

[224]

[251]

Their food is simple in material and there is but little variation in the manner of preparation. Of meats, besides chickens, they have beef and pork, which are however rarely used except at feasts. They know nothing of salting meat for future use and can only consume one of these animals when a large number is together. Besides the scarcity of beef is so great that probably no Indian possesses more than one or two animals at a time. Wild meat, like peccary, red monkey, (the other species are rarely eaten,) tapir, tiger, even otter, armadillo, and some other small animals are occasionally shot. In this case, all of the meat that is not eaten at once is dried as hard as a bone, and perfectly black, in the smoke of a slow fire. Larger species of birds like curassow are also treated in the same way. It is an interesting fact, universally attested, that the bones of this bird are absolutely poisonous to dogs, while the meat, though tough, is not unpalatable and is perfectly innocuous to man. After a meal it is the never-failing custom to gather all the bones carefully, and either burn them or place them out of reach of the dogs. I do not know whether the flesh would be equally dangerous, though I doubt if it was ever wasted on a dog. This property is said to be due to some fruit or seed they eat. Of vegetable food, plantains are the staple. In times of scarcity, bananas take their place, besides being eaten raw when ripe. The Indians also occasionally eat a raw ripe plantain, although they are coarse and the flavor is inferior. The methods of preparation are, roasted green, when they make a poor substitute for bread; roasted ripe, when they are eaten with chocolate, with the idea of sweetening it. They are also boiled green, with meat, with green corn, or even alone. Ripe plan-

252

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri

62	THE BRIBRI
286 237 282 ●224 415 285 415 [482] [854]	bag is made is tighter and more closely twisted, giving the netting a ribbed appearance. Pl. xii exhibits the detail of a large bag of simple loop-work alternating with knotted net, the looping occurring only near the top and bottom. Another form of small bag is made from the scrotum of a buck, stuffed with ashes while still fresh, and dried. Bags of this nature were seen worn about the necks of small children, and were probably filled with hunting charms. They could not be purchased, as they were regarded as possessing magic properties. <i>Baskets.</i>—Bags and baskets of open weave and of sizes ranging from that of a cup to those as big as a washtub, were seen. The latter are used chiefly for carrying burdens or for storage. Besides these baskets and bags, carrying-straps of bark were used, and with these passed over the forehead, as among the forest Indians of northern America, heavy burdens could be transported for long distances. Pl. xiii illustrates the use of a carrying basket and
VI	INDIAN NOTES

262 fish are eaten when the Indians go to the
825 Pacific coast for salt. A large and small clam
which come from the coast are also favorite
foods.

224 The Boruca prefer to hunt in groups of two
or three and without dogs. Their favorite
time for hunting is when the moon is new,
and, strangely enough, on Tuesday and
Thursday. Night hunting is almost never
practised, as this is the time when the poisonous
snakes roam, the most dreaded of which is
the bushmaster (*Lachesis muta*). Traps are

223 used for birds, and are generally placed in the
rice fields or in the corn fields. The traps are
made by the men with cane (*Gynerium sagit-
tatum* [Aubl.] Beauv.) and are box-shaped, but
without a bottom. They are placed in the
fields with food inside and sustained at one end
by a small stick which is broken in two, but
is balanced one end on top of the other. A
string is fastened to one portion of the broken
stick, and is left on the ground next to the
food. The bird enters the trap, and walking,
moves the string, which in turn pulls aside the
piece of stick, and the box drops, imprisoning
the bird. Sling shots are used by the boys to
shoot birds. The bow and arrow for hunting
[411
177] have entirely disappeared, their place being
taken by the shot gun and rifle.

226 Fishing. The Boruca have five ways of
catching fish. One manner is with a vine
[824
278] (*Serjania cornigera* Turcz.). They also mash
the bark of the *espavel* (*Anacardium excelsum*
[Bert. & Balb.] Skeels) and sometimes the bark
of the sandbox tree, *javillo* (*Hura polyandra*
Baill.). This last is less effective. To fish with
vines or barks, a portion of the river is
hemmed in by the men who construct a wall
of stone at the upper and the lower end. They
then mash the material chosen and throw it in
the dammed section. The fish come to the sur-
face stupefied, and are gathered by the men.
The Boruca prefer to fish, however, with
spears. These are of two sorts: long white
canes between 57 and 58 inches long with an
extended tip of pejibaye palm about 18 inches
[227] in length with several barbs at the end, and a
shorter cane about 40 inches long, also with a
pejibaye end, but without barbs and with a steel
needle-like protrusion fastened to the pejibaye
section. The short spear is used in the local
creek for small fish, while the longer one is

825 and drink and eat with the people. He was always dressed as an old man, and none knew him on these visits. He came incognito so that he could find out what in truth was passing amongst his people. Although the Indians say that formerly the Hill was a gathering place for their secret tribal meetings, no Indians will go there today, even though there are supposedly wild cattle there, and cattle are economically very important to the Boruca. This cattle is held to be the property of "Tatica Cuazarn," and cannot be touched. The Boruca recount that one of them went to the Hill hunting, and saw a man bathing. He started to shoot the man, but his gun wouldn't go off. This man was, of course, "Tatica Cuazarn." Cuazarn has a son who is called Sankrao, and who lives in the mountains of Golfo Dulce.

778 North and west of Boruca, there are certain lagoons which the Indians do not like to pass, and never will go by them if they are accompanied by dogs. One of these lagoons is the "Laguna de Danta." Here, "Mamram" is supposed to dwell. "Mamram" in Boruca signifies witchery.

● 224 If one goes hunting, it is not good to say to him, "God be with you," because one will have bad luck.

756 Sickness, Curing, and Shamanism. Shamanism as such is not practised any longer amongst the Boruca. Formerly the Boruca had real shamans, whom they called *bruk-bri*, but they have long since disappeared. The power of the shaman, however, is still respected, and when a grave sickness appears, or a great misfortune affects the tribe or village, the *bruk-bri* is sent for from some of the Talamanca peoples, chiefly the *Cabécares*. These peoples call the shaman, *sukia*, and the one who travels to Boruca is known as the *cacique sukia*, the title being derived from the word for shaman and the widespread Costa Rican word for chieftain. The *cacique sukia* is held in deadly respect by the Indians. Chicha, as well as the most attractive girl in town are offered to him on his visits. When curing, the *sukia* stays outside behind the house, all night, and smokes incessantly. He then enters and blows smoke on the patient. The *sukia* does not accept money, and only at times will take presents of a pig or food.

[755]

Folk-Lore of the Bribri and Brunka Indians.

7

there was standing a man of stately appearance. He asked, "Here I am; how art thou?" The other answered, "Well; why didst thou come here?" And he told how he had shot at a tapir, and had lost it. Then the man of the house went on, and said, "Why dost thou shoot to play? When thou shootest, do it so as to kill, so that the poor beast does not fall a prey to the worms. But I see thou art tired, so come in and have a seat." And he brought him *chicha*, and gave him to eat the meat of the tapir at which the hunter had shot without effect, but which the owner of the house had killed.

And when he had rested, drunk, and eaten, the hunter said that he had visited his host. But this one replied, "There, take thou this piece of cane, and plant it at thine home, and when the cane has grown its full growth again, then, but not until then, shalt thou be able to speak once more."

When the hunter got to his house, he could not utter even a word, so he planted the cane; and it grew, and when it had attained its full height, then the hunter could talk again, and he told all that had happened to him.

The man in whose house the hunter had been was the king of the tapirs, and this is why he treated him so.

VI. THE KING OF THE WILD HOGS.

Among the beasts, the wild hogs also have a king. He is to all appearance like a very white and good-looking fellow, who goes through the woods with a big stick in his hand. He lives in an enchanted place on the heights of San-krá-ua, and his door is guarded by a huge tiger.

The king of the hogs is displeased when the Indians wound his subjects without killing them at once. Once upon a time there was in Boruca one of those bad hunters who had the reputation of being a bad archer, and who always wounded the animals, but never killed them. One day he went into the woods, and met with a large herd of hogs, after which he ran and ran, without being able to reach them. When he paid attention to the place he had got into, he saw that he had gone astray. Then he went ahead until he came into the presence of the king of the hogs, who caught him by the throat and said, "Why dost thou hurt all my hogs without ever killing them? Now thou shalt suffer for it, because thou shalt remain in my hands until thou hast healed them all." And there he stayed for a long time, healing hogs; and at the beginning they did not let him heal them, but came upon him to bite. So that he suffered a thousand deaths, until they were cured a little, and became so tame as to follow him everywhere.

When there were no more hogs to cure, the king called out

[P. 14 (A)]

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Bribri
Cabecar

262 (*Carica* sp.), the melonlike fruit of the vine
137 *Passiflora vitifolia* HBK and the fruit of the
252 guava (*Inga spectabilis* [Vahl] Willd.) are
eaten raw.

Palmitos of various classes including the bitter and sweet are roasted, baked in ashes, or eaten raw. Wild cacao (*Theobroma simiarum* Donnell-Smith and *Theobroma angustifolium* Moc. & Sesse) and *patate* (*Theobroma bicolor* Humb. & Bonpl.) are used like the cultivated cacao. Certain white mushrooms which grow on old tree trunks are also boiled and eaten.

262 Food Animals (Hunting). Many wild animals
136 are consumed by the Talamancans including monkeys, *guatusa* (*Dasyprocta* sp.), rabbits, boars (*Tayassu pecari spiradens* Goldman), pigs (*Pecari tajacu cruspiger* Bangs), deer (*Mazama americana cerasina* Hollister), and tapir, in spite of the fact that certain groups still maintain food tabus (see Tabus). The favorite way to hunt is with one or more companions and with dogs. There are other methods, however, still in practice.

224 411 The most common equipment consists of
[231] the *pejibaye* or black palm bow, arrow, and blow gun (fig. 3, c).¹ The bow is relatively short, measuring around 2.35 meters, and is held in a horizontal position, the finger pulling the string (fig. 3, a-b).² Arrowheads are thrust into a wild cane shaft as far as possible, fastened with wax, and tied with *pita* (agave thread) (see Fibers) so that when the arrow is shot the head is not lost. For jaguars and other large animals, the heads are made of metal (usually an old knife blade) and of *pejibaye* palm. For birds and small animals, there are barbed, straight, and stunning heads all made of *pejibaye* or black palm.

[223] Blow guns are also used for birds and small animals. They are from 5 feet 7 inches to 5 feet 10 inches or more in length. When possible, they are made of *morki*³ (*Saurauia costaricensis* Donnell-Smith), although *kurá* wood is sometimes used. Wood for blow guns is cut at the wane of the moon as it is supposedly less pulpy at that time. The method of manufacture is simple. The piece of wood

[821] 822

[192] ¹ It is interesting to note that gun or rifle is called in Chirripó *mogLo* meaning literally "blow gun stick"; in Cabecar *sakmogLo* or "our place rifle" or

4 [see category 116, END PLATE 2-ANALYST.]

[P. 14(8)]

Bribri
Cabécar

322 selected is placed over the fire to soften. A wire is heated and is pushed through the length of the wood to remove the soft pulp. If wire is not available, a *pejibaye* rod is substituted. The inside is smoothed by wrapping *chumico*

[824] leaves (*Curatella americana* L.) around a *pejibaye* rod and rubbing it up and down. The

[237] gun is then filled with ashes and the outside covered with beeswax and carbon to preserve it. Two shells, beads, beetles, or lumps

411 of wax are often used as sights (fig. 12, d).⁴ The balls for ammunition are made of clay which has been dried, ground fine, and then mixed with water, worked with the fingers and rounded with a wild turkey bone as needed. They are carried in string bags.

[415] Larces made of *pejibaye* wood with metal heads are occasionally seen. When rifles or shotguns are available, rubber bags are used to carry a powder horn, wick, etc.

[223] Bolas are made by small boys for hunting birds. *Guarumo* fiber is used instead of cord

[857] and river stones are used for ammunition. A loop of *pita* (agave thread) is made in one end into which the forefinger is placed. Then both ends of the bola are grasped in the hands and it is swung over the head.

223 A resin called *yok* in Cabécar is put on a tree where birds are apt to feed. Their feet

[314] stick in this, prohibiting escape. Wild boars and large game are often trapped. This is

224 accomplished by tying a rope to a tree beside a path and making a slipknot at the other end, leaving a wide loop. The loop is placed in the center of the path and the animal is snared in it.

At night, in Talamanca, another type of lure is used. Crab claws, with bits of meat left in them, are tied to a piece of string about 22 yards long. Bananas, or whatever fruit the animal being hunted uses for food, is attached to one end of this string. The string is tied to a stick which is thrust into the ground to hold the bait in place. The hunters use a leaf to shield their light and remain hidden. They are alerted by the sound of the claws rattling and shoot their prey with a bow and arrow or a

[262] gun. There is a superstition connected with

[192] "blow gun stick"; in Bribri *skamokol* signifying the same as in Cabécar.

[P. 15 (A)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri
Cabezar

224 this method of hunting that only cold food
262 may be eaten before the hunt as hot food brings bad luck.

226 Fishing. The most common method of fishing is with the bow and barbed or straight palm-wood arrow (fig. 3, b).² Small fish are sometimes killed by the blow of a machete and hooks are occasionally used. Grasshoppers are the favorite bait. These are caught and kept in a gourd in which air holes have been bored and a corncob is used as a stopper or cap until ready for use. Grasshoppers can live five days in such a container. Conical casting nets, similar to those used by the Guaymí of Panama, are also employed. On the Pacific side, amongst the Bribri, sometimes the stream is dammed and a wooden fish trap is used.

Next to the bow and arrow, however, the most popular manner of fishing is with poisons. The two most frequently used are obtained from a tree (*Phyllanthus* sp. Pittieri) and from a vine (*Serjania* sp.).²³ The tree poison blinds and kills all fish, and is so strong that the day after a person has handled it, it is common for his face to remain swollen and to hurt. When this poison is used, the river is dammed with tree trunks downstream. Around four o'clock in the morning thirty or so men begin to scrape or shred pieces of the *Phyllanthus* into the water. Non-pregnant women and children gather downstream to collect the fish in baskets (*bavas*). The organizer of this event receives one or two fish from each participant, the number depending on the total amount caught, and can keep all that he himself catches. Today, permission has to be obtained from the police agent in Talamanca and the organizer has to give him a share.

The vine colors the water green but only stuns the fish. It is used in small creeks and not large rivers. Only two men are needed to fish in this way. The vine, leaves, and stem are beaten into small pieces with a stick and then are thrown into the dammed waterway.

A third fish poison is sometimes prepared from a tuber which resembles the *ñame*. It is called *wiwakri* in Bribri and is mashed and thrown into the water.

252 Food Preparation. On the whole, food is

²³ For the indigenous names see Plant List in Appendix.

3 [see category 116 - END PLATE 2 - ANALYST.]

[P. 22(B)]

Bribri
Cabécar

283 sp.) is used on the Pacific slope for tumplines
824 and rope.

287 Bark Cloth. Men generally make bark cloth
[462] as it requires considerable strength. There are
[824] three kinds of *mastate* or bark cloth made
in Talamanca and two on the Pacific side. Red
mastate (*Brosimum costaricensis* Liebm.)
and white *mastate* (*Brosimum* sp.) are used on
both slopes. The third kind is *Poulsenia armata*
(Miq.) Standl; Moraceae. The method of
preparation is similar.

The bark of the first two trees is cut and
rolled at a right angle to the grain. The outer
surface is removed by beating with a stick
and then with a wooden club cut with hori-
zontal grooves, one side of which is usually
slightly curved. It is soaked in water, pulled to
the shape and size desired, and left in the sun
to dry. Stones are placed at the corners to
hold the shape. The cloth is used for blankets,
[513] hammocks (amongst the Cabécar only), to
carry babies, as tumplines, belts, and loin-
cloths, and as an article of trade with the
[438] Borucas.

The third type, *testi* in Cabécar, is prepared
by cutting around the tree with a machete the
desired size for the cloth. Then a wedge-shaped
wooden stick is used to peel it off the trunk.
The piece is then doubled and the outer bark
is cut in a thin sheet and rolled back, leaving
the cambium or inner bark. This is soaked for
several days and is afterwards beaten with a
wooden stick to make it pliable and soft. It is
used primarily for blankets.

[824] In Talamanca and in Chirripó, the wild
[415] rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.) also furnishes a cloth
for hunting pouches.

286 Net Bags. The Bribri have long been famous
415 for the manufacture of net bags (see Trade),
although the Cabécares are known to make
them occasionally. They serve a variety of
purposes besides being a depository for per-
sonal and household things. They are used for
hunting and for carrying all manner of cargo,
from plantains to babies. Most bags are made
of *pita* or *cabuya* thread and have a long handle
which also acts as a tumpline. The usual shape
[224] is baglike, but those for blow-gun hunting are
[227] elongated and have small divisions or pockets.
At times in Talamanca, casting nets are made
from the same material and in the same tech-
nique.

[P. 35A)]

SA19 Talamancas SA19

Bribri
Cabécar

765 is often made and is drunk at the burial place
 [273] during the ceremony. Pittier¹¹⁸ records the
 [782] [Text CONTINUES TOP OF P. 35(B)--Qualyst]
 [825]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 The Clans. The Bribri and the Cabécares are
 [616] divided into matrilineal clans which developed
 from moieties. Although a number of clans
 have disappeared through war and sickness,
 those which remain strictly follow the ancient
 582 rules. This emphasizes the non-marriageable
 614 position of all the mother's relatives. A vestige
 of cross-cousin marriage exists but is not
 compulsory. One can marry the mother's
 brother's child but never the offspring of the
 maternal aunt. On the father's side, beyond
 the father's sister and the first cousins, one can
 marry whom one wants. The importance of
 614 clan relationship is easily understood when
 673 one takes into consideration the moral code of
 these peoples. According to this there are three
 great sins which are placed in the following
 order:

- 1) To have sexual relations with own clan.
- 2) To allow an animal to suffer when wounded in-
 [825] stead of killing it rapidly.
- 3) To kill a man. (This may be the influence of the
 [224] Roman Catholic Church and the government of
 [177] Costa Rica.)

582 The need to adhere to clan regulations in
 614 regard to marriage is illustrated by the forma-
 tion of new clans as a result of marriage out-
 side of the tribe proper. This has become more
 [164] important because in the past 50 years many
 clans have died out due to measles and yellow
 fever epidemics, and the always present
 amoeba. In Salitre, for example, a new group
 has been formed which is known as *terú*. This
 started when a Bribri man belonging to the
umirak clan married a Térraba woman. The
 Cabécares are less inclined to form new divi-
 sions. Those who have inter-married with the
 [166] Bribri do not remain in Cabécar territory (see
 list of Bribri clans).

614 On the Caribbean side, clans are associated
 [423] with given geographical sections (see Villages;
 [754] Land Tenure). The land is owned by the
 complete group and the medicine man in

¹¹⁸ Pittier, 1938, p. 26.¹¹⁹ Gabb, 1875, pp. 507-509.

[P. 43(A)]

Bribri
Cabezar

756 term is *sif* or *sienkúrua*. Individually, they are
called *kúrua* or *dikúrua*; *sorkúrua* or *sorkú-*
778 *rua*. They resemble small river stones and are

[172] sometimes found in pre-Columbian graves.
Today, the stones are "given" or "appear" to
the medicine man on special occasions, or are
handed down as a sacred heirloom by a col-

[428] league who must also belong to the same clan.
When a medicine man dies, if he does not wish
to give his own stones to a young professional,
his brother or clan keeps them until a new
doctor has need of them.

[755] Curing (*see* Curing) is impossible without
these two stones although other ones are also
used. Some are taken from the belly of a wild
pig, tapir, deer, etc. These, besides being em-

• [224] ployed for curing, are used to call the par-
ticular animal when one hunts and it is for this
reason the Indians say that medicine men never
lack game.

[824] Leaves with white spots, called *aik* (*Aracea*
sp.) in Bribri, also are part of the curing
paraphernalia. The sap is caustic and the leaf
is used more as an indication of magic power
than for any other reason.

[844] Tobacco for smoking is essential during
childbirth. Other articles which compose a
medicine man's equipment and which were left

[755] by *sibu* to be utilized while curing include the
[237] shell or body of a small land turtle, *kué*,
a lizard, *trook*; the eyeteeth of jaguars; the
feathers of certain water fowl, macaws, quet-
zals, hawks, and other birds; animal skins; and
shells of which three are of particular impor-
tance. These are *tsumanik* and *tsrikuo*, a rose
and white clam shell; and *duk*, a conch shell.

756 Training and Procedure. Although there is no
fixed time required for preparing to become a
medicine man, it usually takes from two to
six years, depending upon the capacity of the
novice's memory. The first six months are
intensive. The apprentice goes for three days
without eating. He makes a lean-to in the
woodland out of all the herbs he can gather,
edible and non-edible, and stays there for two
days so as not to see the sun. At night he can
go outside. During this period, the medicine
man appears and teaches the ritual songs. After
two days and two nights the teacher and his
pupil eat all the edible leaves or herbs of the
hut.

The next task for the novice is to obtain

[P.47(B)]

Cabécar
Bribri
Terrabá

784
825
[779]
[224] tion are still evident in many tabus pertaining to animals. Among the Cabécares, all animals have a plant name which is used when a hunt is planned. One does not say that he is going to hunt a given creature. He announces that he is going to look for yuca or *tiquízque*, as the case might be. This is to deceive the protector or *dueño* of the animal so that the game will not be warned. Each sickness is associated with a distinct animal and is believed to be sent by *ditegLa*, lord of illness. The toad is associated with a sickness that causes pain in the stomach, loss of weight, coughing, and then death. The first women in the world had this illness. A medicine man passed the toad over them as a cure. It is bad to touch a toad. 784
825 The *duriwak* clan of the Bribri cannot touch toads nor possums. In fact, the Buriers (see 614
262 Death) are the only persons who can touch buzzards or possums. They are allowed to kill the latter. The *kor'wak* clan of the now extinct 767
[775] *korrebué* or Singers could not eat nor touch tapir because it was the reincarnation of their ancestors. The *sanfswa* and *minúLiwa* not only cannot eat this today, but the *minúLiwa* must even change their direction if they see tapir tracks. Bribri women and children can only eat this meat if it has first been smoked and then cooked by an old woman. Macaw meat is tabu to women and to men belonging to the Bribri clans of *duriwak*, *saLwak*, *kor'wak*, *kiémburwak*, *sulariwak*, and *ruLgik-wak*. Before other men can consume it, macaw has to be prepared in a special pot and the partakers have to wash their hands.

FOLKLORE

THE WAR BETWEEN THE CABÉCARES AND
TERRIBÍS
(Cabécar)

173 *sibu* left *sibuLetá*, the green mountain, in
726 Cabécar. It was the time when people wore only loincloths of *mastate*. Many Terribís (Terrabas) suddenly appeared to kill the

remembered that these people were under the dominance of the Bribri, and according to Cabécar tradition definitely took part and suffered in these raids as the version cited denotes.

[P.68(B)]

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Bribri
Cabécar* 539
825
[821]

warns when it is going to rain by howling in the morning and in the afternoon.

(17) WHY THE CUYEO²⁰² HAS A TIGHTLY
CLOSED BEAK²⁰³

(Bribri)

Once *sibu* became ill and he sent the *cuyeo* to find out if he would get well. The bird took it upon himself to consult no one but to tell *sibu* that the answer was he would die. As a punishment for this, he, *sibu*, pressed the *cuyeo*'s beak tightly shut.

RECREATION

574 of food and drink will be offered them. Con-
484 versation, in this case, is confined almost en-
[521] tirely to the men or if there are women with the travelers, they speak separately with the women of the household.

517 Hunting and fishing may in a sense be classed
224 as recreation for the men as well as part of
226 their livelihood. Here again, except in the rare instances of community use of fish poisons, it is a family matter.

296 Women and young girls of the same family,
252 particularly among the Bribri, are fond of gathering at the side of a stream to wash clothes and grind foodstuffs. They swim and sing, praising in their songs the virtues of their respective swains (see Songs). This is the closest these people come to what might be termed a normal visit.

195 Cursing is not usual. The worst phrase a Bribri can use against another is:

bé rər webLa suLue es béwa bəmitsɔn.
you are man bad like devil take
(carry off).

The really unpleasant word here is *suLue* which means bad or ugly and is applied as a curse. A milder term is *bikési* which means useless, lazy, or coward. In Cabécar, however, the equivalent of this is *səkəŋé* which is a very strong term.

476
574
273

Reunions. Reunions, although pre-Columbian

²⁰² See Linguistic Texts: *hipo* (cuyeo).

[P. 70(A)]

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Bribri
Cabecar

535 example, *buréte* is performed by a line of men; *busiki* is with men and women in the same line; *bulakule* is usually a line of men but there may be one of women. When one sex dances, the arm is interlocked at the elbow with the next in line. Women and men put their hand on the shoulder of the person in front. The single line step is the first one used in the circle dance. Twenty people or less participate in these lines. The drum is held under the arms [533] of the male dancers. Females do not play them.

535 The common dances among the Bribri are
773 those of the buzzard and the monkey. Each has its own explanation. The first one is said to have originated because the boss of the buzzards went to *sibu* to learn to sing and dance. He learned and came to earth wearing a collar and showed man how to sing and dance (see Theological Myths: *The Dance*). Some versions hold that it was *sibu* himself in the form of a buzzard who did this and not the boss of these birds. He wore a collar and taught human beings to dance in a circle because the buzzards after eating fly in a circle.²⁰⁶ When he finished his task, he retired to where the sun lives.

The monkey dance is supposed to have been taught to man by the grandfather of the Congo monkey who learned this from *sibu*. Its prime purpose is to have man happy (see Lay Songs: *bul-ikLak*).

535 Another celebration to do with happiness
342 and good luck is seen in Talamanca among the
582 Bribri when a new home is to be occupied.

The whole ceremony is known as *itsó* (see Songs), taking its name from the *displina* palm (*itsó* or *kpmat* in Bribri; *Chamaedorea* sp.) from which the mask is made today. The beard of the face is Spanish moss. After the inauguration of a house, the mask, which is supposed to assure the longevity of the family who are to inhabit the new home, is hidden and the celebrants have to hunt for it before the dance can be performed.

Segarra and Julia²⁰⁷ describe a hunter's

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[776]
[172]
[171]

²⁰⁶ This interpretation of God in buzzard form wearing a collar is reflected in the gold figures found in ancient graves. The style and form of the collars associated with these figures are similar to the bead ones used today by the Guaymí Indians of north-western Panama.

[P. 70 (B)]

SA 19 Talamasca SA 19

Cabécar
Bribri

- 535 dance which was performed in a circle by men
 • 224 and women with one person singing but the
 599 whole group joining in the chorus. The song
 recounted the experiences during a hunt.

525 There are various dances held in connection
 [764] with death and burial but they are seldom seen
 [184] today outside of upper Talamasca.

[765] Pittier²⁰⁰ mentions a bone dance performed
 at the time of secondary burial by men if the
 deceased was an adult and by women if a
 child. The bone dance witnessed by the writer
 was carried out by a line of women and one
 of men. The person taking the place of the
 Singer (*see* Death) chanted the life history of
 [593] the departed, and kept time with a gourd
 rattle. His four assistants in the line of men
 had drums under their arms which they beat
 as they danced.

[756] A different bone dance which is a remnant
 [727] of a war dance with trophy heads is occasion-
 ally performed when the medicine man is feel-
 ing particularly sure of himself and wants to
 celebrate. Men and women form a circle with
 interlocked arms. It is said that skulls were
 [178] once balanced on the arms. Today, nothing is
 placed there. The men sing and the women
 join in the chorus singing *ékéke* meaning
 "good" or "well."

599 Songs. All sacred songs are basically Cabécar
 even though they may be sung in Bribri. The
 Medicine Man and sometimes the Burier
 [198] sing these songs which are usually in ancient
 Cabécar and are not understood by the masses.

Lay songs are common to the Bribri and
 very rare among the Cabécar. The Bribri de-
 light in inventing songs to fit the occasion.
 Both men and women like to sing and do so
 on the slightest provocation when working,
 bathing, washing, or minding the baby. The
 addition of words only for their sound is
 [197] characteristic. Likewise, many Térraba words
 are found in Bribri songs, the meaning of
 which is unknown to the singer. In fact, the

[195] sung language permits all sorts of liberties as
 well as having a certain vocabulary of its own.

[773] western Panama. The traditional home of the Bribri
 [173] is in northwest Panama. *See* Stone, 1952, p. 252.

²⁰⁰ Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 594-95.

²⁰¹ Pittier, 1938, pp. 25-26.